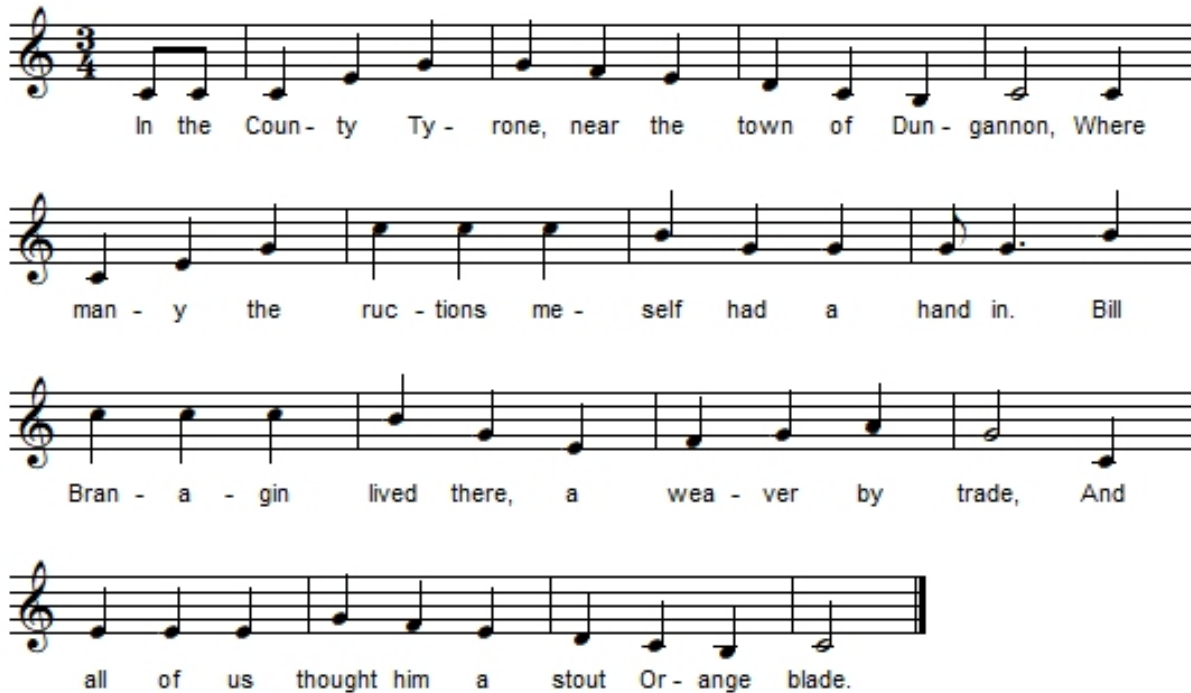


The Old Orange Flute



In the Coun- ty Ty- rone, near the town of Dun- gannon, Where
man - y the ruc - tions me - self had a hand in. Bill
Bran - a - gin lived there, a wea - ver by trade, And
all of us thought him a stout Or - ange blade.

1. In the County Tyrone, near the town of Dungannon,
Where many the ructions meself had a hand in.
Bill Branagin lived there, a weaver by trade,
And all of us thought him a stout Orange blade.
2. On the Twelfth of July as it yearly did come,
Bill played on his flute to the sound of the drum.
You may talk of your harp, your piano or lute,
But none can compare with the Old Orange Flute.
3. Bill, the deceiver, he took us all in;
He married a Papist named Bridget McGinn.
Turned Papist himself and forsook the old cause
That gave us our freedom, religion and laws.
4. Now, boys of the townland made some noise upon it,
And Bill had to fly to the province of Connaught.
He fled with his wife and his fixings to boot,
And along with the latter his Old Orange Flute.
5. At the chapel on Sunday to atone for past deeds,
He'd say Pater and Aves and counted his beads.
'Til after some time, at the priest's own desire
He went with that old flute to play in the choir.

6. He went with that old flute for to play for the Mass,
But the instrument shivered and cried "O Alas!"
And try though he would, though it made a great noise,
The flute would play only "The Protestant Boys".
7. Bill jumped and he stared and he got in a flutter
And threw the old flute in the bless'd holy water.
He thought that this charm would bring some other sound;
When he tried it again, it played "Croppies Lie Down".
8. Now, for all he could whistle and finger and blow,
To play Papish music he found it no go.
"Kick the Pope" and "Boyne Water" it freely would sound,
But one Papish squeak in it could not be found.
9. At the council of priests that was held the next day
They decided to banish the old flute away.
They couldn't knock heresy out of its head,
So they bought Bill a new one to play in its stead.
10. So the Old Flute was doomed and its fate was pathetic.
'Twas fastened and burned at the stake as heretic.
As the flames soared around it, they heard a strange noise;
'Twas the old flute still playing "The Protestant Boys."

“The Old Orange Flute” is a song originating in Ireland, often associated with the Protestant Orange Order. Despite this, it had a certain amount of cross-community appeal, especially in the period before the commencement of The Troubles in the late 1960s.

The earliest known records of the words appeared in 1907 in two books: **A Collection of Orange and Protestant Songs** and **The Golden Treasury of Irish songs and Lyrics**. The latter, published in New York, classifies the song as "anonymous street ballad".

The tune itself, often known as "Villikins and his Dinah" after a music hall song of the 1850s (and in America as " Betsy from Pike"), is also the melody for the Irish War of Independence song "The Bold Black and Tans", the bawdy song "The Thrashing Machine" and is related to the jig tune "Paddy Whack".

Of the melodies mentioned in the lyric:

"The Protestant Boys" is usually sung to the tune "Lilliburlero",

"Kick the Pope" is an Orangemen's marching tune,

"Boyne Water" celebrates the Battle of the Boyne in 1690,

"Croppies Lie Down" is an Orangemen's song from the Rebellion of 1798.

It has been recorded by The Clancy Brothers & Tommy Makem, The Dubliners and others. I learned it from the Clancys.